

HOMELESS SHELTER AND SERVICES PROGRAMS

Since 1985, the State of Wisconsin has had a commitment to assisting homeless individuals and families. A variety of funding mechanisms administered by the Division of Housing and Community Development provide funds to local agencies for emergency, transitional and permanent shelter and services for homeless persons. The state distributes these funds through a variety of decentralized approaches using formula and competitive application processes. Local sponsors then have the opportunity to respond to the specific needs of their communities.

Homeless programs administered by the Division of Housing and Community Development include:

State Shelter Subsidy Grant Program

This program provides up to 50% of an emergency shelter program's annual operating budget. Eligible applicants are county or municipal governing bodies or agencies, for profit entities, Indian tribal governments, community action agencies or other private non-profit organizations. Only generic emergency facilities and voucher programs for homeless persons are eligible. The state's annual general-purpose revenue (GPR) appropriation for this program is \$1,131,000.

Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG)

Funding authorized by HUD under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, ESG funds may be used for homeless prevention activities and essential services, renovation and rehabilitation of shelter facilities and shelter operating costs. The shelter programs may include shelters for victims of domestic violence, runaway adolescents, persons with disabilities as well as generic shelter and transitional housing programs. Any city, county, or private non-profit may apply for and receive some of the \$1.9 million in annual funding for its homeless shelter or transitional housing program.

Transitional Housing Program (THP)

This program provides funds that help formerly homeless persons or families achieve real, lasting economic independence. Funds may be used for housing costs, childcare, educational or vocational training, transportation, or other costs needed to assist the transitional housing participant in attaining self-sufficiency. Eligible applicants are government or private non-profit organizations that currently operate transitional housing and support service programs. The State appropriates \$375,000 a year for this program and funding is combined with ESG funds.

Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)

The program funds are used for rental assistance to help homeless individuals live on premises that are safe and sanitary, modest in design and reasonable in cost. Funding can also be used to prevent rent eviction or home foreclosure for qualifying households. Funds are not available to provide rental assistance for institutional settings. Approximately \$1.4 million is awarded annually in combination with ESG and THP funds and may be used to meet the HUD ESG match requirement.

Interest Bearing Real Estate Trust Account Program (IBRETA)

Since 1993 a law requires real estate brokers to establish interest-bearing real estate trust accounts for the deposit of all down payments, earnest money and other trust funds received by the broker and related to the conveyance of real estate. The interest from the IBRETA accounts are remitted to the State and approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 is remitted annually. The proceeds are used to make grants to organizations that provide shelter or services to homeless individuals or families. The Division augments existing emergency and transitional homeless programs with these funds.

HUD Continuum of Care Supportive Housing Program

Beginning in 1997 the Division has participated in the HUD Continuum of Care Supportive Housing program. The proposals submitted each year have garnered from \$3.6 million to \$5.7 million in grant funds to support a wide variety of transitional and permanent housing and supportive service programs for homeless persons across the state. The funds originate from a national HUD competition and the grant proposal covers 69 counties. The Division's application process is coordinated with the Wisconsin Association of Community Action Programs (WISCAP); the Department of Health and Family Services, and the WI Department of Veterans Affairs as well as hundreds of local organizations.

Projects for Assistance in the Transition from Homelessness (PATH)

This program funds services for individuals with serious mental illness, or with co-occurring substance abuse disorders, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. PATH funds outreach, mental health and substance abuse services, case management, and connects participants to housing, primary health care and job training. Eligible applicants are government or non-profit organizations that provide services in an area with a population of more than 150,000. PATH is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, a component of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. WI receives about \$700,000 per year.

Wisconsin ServicePoint (WISP)

WISP is a web-enhanced database software program implemented to better understand the scope of homelessness in Wisconsin, to improve service delivery to homeless persons, and to evaluate the effectiveness of service interventions. The site became available in 2001 we have more than 700 users working at over 125 partner agencies who have created more than 150,000 client records.

WIFrontDoor

WIFrontDoor is a web-based resource database program that is available to anyone who has access to the Internet. The site is divided into two major components: a centralized collection of social service agency and program information and a listing of affordable housing units available throughout Wisconsin. The web sites can be found at www.wifrontdoor.org and www.wifrontdoorhousing.org. Questions about WIFrontDoor should be sent to fdhelp@commerce.state.wi.us

Funds for homeless shelter and services may also be available from the following sources:

- Community Development Block Grants administered by state or local CDBG Offices
- Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- WHEDA Foundation Grant Program
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago

For program information, contact:

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